Response to "A Patient-Centered Approach to Clinical Practice Guidelines in Otolaryngology"

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What is This?
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Sponsorships or competing interests that may be relevant to content are disclosed at the end of this article.

The American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery Foundation (AAO-HNSF) agrees with Drs Pynnonen and Hawley’s assessment “that the use of patient education and decision support materials for shared decision making (SDM) will enhance the effectiveness of SDM and improve the uptake of CPGs.”

Over the past several years, systematic review (SR) and clinical practice guideline (CPG) developers have realized the importance of making their findings both accessible and understandable to the public.

In 2011, the Association of Medical Research Charities, in collaboration with the British Library and the United Kingdom Office for Library and Information Networking (UKOLN) at the University of Bath, started the Patients Participate! initiative. The initiative examined how patients and the general public could be given the right tools to make sense of research findings. One of the key findings was that all published scientific papers would benefit from having a section in plain English.

In February 2013, the Cochrane Colloquium’s Consumers Network finalized a set of minimum standards for plain-language summaries (PLS) developed as companion pieces for their published SRs. The AAO-HNSF process for developing its PLS for its published CPGs is based closely off the Cochrane standards. In November 2013, the AAO-HNSF published its first CPG PLS for Bell’s palsy, and the CPG PLS for acute otitis externa were released in January 2014.

Plain-language summaries are a way to communicate the technical recommendations within the CPGs to a broad audience, in a jargon-free and clear manner. They are written at an eighth-grade reading level to ensure they are clear to most audiences. All future AAO-HNSF CPGs will have the companion PLS released with the published guideline. The next version of the AAO-HNSF Clinical Practice Guideline Development Manual will include the new AAO-HNSF standards for developing PLS.

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References